

TOP SECRET

HGCA-1005

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ESPERANCE

Chief of Station, Guatemala

Operational

ESPERANCE

CIA HISTORICAL REVIEW PROGRAM
RELEASE AS SANITIZED

2003

1. Subject was stopped and questioned by the authorities from the 3rd Military Zone Headquarters and also by the Guardia Civil officers in Jutiapa. ESPERANCE drove out to the airport and got his car stuck. One of the guards accompanied him back to the cuartel where he was received by Colonel (fnu) ALBANA who advised that the airport was a restricted area and civilian cars were prohibited though the field is open to civilian planes. ESPERANCE explained that he was looking for farm land and had inadvertently gotten on the wrong road. At this time no attempt was made to search ESPERANCE or his car. The guard who accompanied ESPERANCE from the airport said that the rifle he was carrying wasn't loaded.

2. After leaving the cuartel ESPERANCE decided to destroy his notes. The film and camera were hidden in the car. On leaving Jutiapa, a Guardia stopped him and took him back to the Guardia Civil headquarters where he was questioned regarding a map and a sheet of paper on which was recorded the mileage between towns. He was asked when he had crossed the border and what he was doing in the area. ESPERANCE said that he was looking for farm land and had been driving around for that purpose. At that time, an individual came in who had been a client of ESPERANCE and verified the story that ESPERANCE had lost a farm and was looking for another. After looking at his passport and examining the maps and papers in his car, ESPERANCE was allowed to leave.

3. Between Guilapa and Guatemala City, ESPERANCE began to think about the questioning and the possibility that he may be stopped in Guatemala City where a more thorough search would unearth the film and telephoto lens then hidden in the car. He decided to stop and bury the film. He wrapped the telephoto lens in several layers of paper and left the package at a Tienda with word that a "Frank Smith" would call for it later.

4. ESPERANCE feels that his behavior in the area was not particularly unusual from other visits and the questioning is a result of a general alert and close check of all persons entering the area from the Salvador border.

5. In view of the possibility that this alert may be widespread, ESPERANCE is now extremely careful about carrying notes of any kind. He has improvised a compartment in the bumper of his jeep for concealing film on his trip to Guajan.

NFR/rbr
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